ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A laser scanning method and system for marking articles is provided wherein control is provided by a single central controller. The system includes a conveyor for conveying the articles in a first direction at a marking station. A conveyor controller controls the conveyor in response to conveyor control signals. A laser and an optical subsystem are optically coupled to the laser for generating a focused laser beam in response to laser control signals. A scan head includes a laser beam deflector for steering the focused laser beam along two substantially orthogonal intersecting axes at the marking station to mark a first predetermined region on at least one of the articles in response to deflection control signals. An actuator is coupled to at least part of the scan head for displacing the axes in a second direction substantially orthogonal to the first direction at the marking station in response to displacement control signals wherein the laser beam deflector steers the focused laser beam along the displaced axes to mark a second predetermined region on the at least one article. A central controller is provided for generating the deflection control signals, the laser control signals, the displacement control signals and the conveyor control signals in response to input data representing marking locations and marking content.